United Nations A/59/PV.46

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-ninth session

46th plenary meeting
Friday, 29 October 2004, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The President (*spoke in French*): If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that,

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from the vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless notified otherwise in advance. I should also hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Fifth Committee.

Agenda item 108

Programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/59/448)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. The draft resolution is entitled "Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council: United Nations support to the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission".

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 59/12).

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 108.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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Agenda item 123

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/59/532)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 123.

Agenda item 129

Financing of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/59/531)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 59/13).

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 129.

Agenda item 136

Financing of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/59/527)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 59/14).

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 136.

Agenda item 153

Financing of the United Nations Operation in Burundi

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/59/528)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 59/15).

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 153.

Agenda item 154

Financing of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/59/529)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 59/16).

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 154.

Agenda item 155

Financing of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/59/530)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 9 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 59/17).

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 155.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Fourth report of the General Committee (A/59/250)

The President (*spoke in French*): In paragraph 1 (a) of the report, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that an additional item entitled "Andean Zone of Peace" be included in the agenda of the current session under heading A — Maintenance of international peace and security.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this item in the agenda of the current session under heading A?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): In paragraph 1 (b), the General Committee further recommends that the item be considered directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to consider this item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform members that the item entitled "Andean Zone of Peace" becomes item 161 on the agenda of the current session.

In paragraph 2 (a) of the report, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the item entitled "Observer status for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in the General Assembly" be included in the agenda of the current session under heading I — Organizational, administrative and other matters.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this item in the agenda of the current session under heading I?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): In paragraph 2 (b), the General Committee further recommends that the item be allocated to the Sixth Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to allocate this item to the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform members that the item entitled "Observer status for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in the General Assembly" becomes item 162 on the agenda of the current session.

The Chairman of the Sixth Committee will be informed of the decision just taken by the General Assembly.

In paragraph 3 (a) of the report, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that an additional sub-item entitled "Election of a member of the International Court of Justice" be included as a sub-item of agenda item 15, "Election to fill vacancies in principal organs" under heading I — Organizational, administrative and other matters.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this additional sub-item in the agenda of the current session as a sub-item of agenda item 15 under heading I?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): In paragraph 3 (b), the General Committee further recommends that

this additional sub-item be considered directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to consider this sub-item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform members that the new sub-item becomes sub-item (c) of agenda item 15 on the agenda of the current session.

In paragraph 4 (a) of the report, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the item entitled "The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan" be included in the agenda of the current session under heading A — Maintenance of international peace and security.

The representative of Armenia has asked for the floor.

I would first like to recall for members rule 23 of the rules of procedure, which provides that:

> "Debate on the inclusion of an item in the agenda, when that item has been recommended for inclusion by the General Committee, shall be limited to three speakers in favour of, and three against, the inclusion."

I should like to stress that at this time we are not discussing the substance of any item.

Mr. Martirosyan (Armenia): We are facing a situation today where an attempt is being made to introduce a new agenda item, using procedural loopholes and under the pretext of urgency, in the absence of factual evidence.

The General Committee, despite the fact that a number of General Committee members objected to the inclusion of that item based on valid concerns for the integrity of the peace process, was forced to take a vote at the demand of Azerbaijan, thus breaking a several-decades-long tradition of consensus in the General Committee.

Those representatives who spoke in the Committee in favour of Azerbaijan's proposal, all representing the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), supported the request based on their membership in that respected organization. However, I would like to emphasize that the Nagorny Karabakh conflict has no religious connotations. Attempts by Azerbaijan to artificially add a religious dimension to a political conflict are inadmissible and dangerous.

My country has always believed in, and acted in the spirit of, the dialogue among civilizations. As one of the oldest Christian nations, we have made our own modest contribution to the promotion of that dialogue by strengthening our centuries-old friendly ties with many Muslim nations.

We are thankful to those OIC members who made their judgement based on the specificities of the situation. I should like to appeal to those OIC members present in this Hall to consider the issue from the perspective of its substance, roots and causes, rather than on the basis of religious affiliation.

Let me highlight several key points that I believe are crucial in the consideration of this issue. First, there is no urgent situation that could justify the Azerbaijanis' request to include a new item in the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly. The memorandum attached to the Azerbaijani request provides no factual information of any kind and is certainly not of any urgent character. On the contrary, the reasons offered to justify the request are totally fabricated and misrepresent the actual situation on the ground.

The former autonomous region of Nagorny Karabakh has always been, and continues to be, Armenian-populated. There has therefore been no change in the demographic situation there. As far as the so-called settlements are concerned, there is no official policy of any kind by any official body to settle the territories that came under the control of local Armenian forces.

This conflict has created refugees on both sides. Before the conflict began, according to the last Soviet Azerbaijani census, there were more than 400,000 Armenians living in Azerbaijan's major cities, far from the fighting. There were all forcibly driven out of their homes and became refugees.

There are no Armenians in Azerbaijan today. They became refugees and were given the chance to return to Nagorny Karabakh proper — and only Karabakh, which has always been overwhelmingly Armenian.

The Azerbaijani Government can make all sorts of accusations and can try to make use of the word "settlement", which is loaded with connotations related

to other conflicts. But they are alone in that exercise. No observer, rapporteur or official — no one — who has been to the region has raised the issue of illegal settlements.

As for the territories surrounding Nagorny Karabakh, they have come under the control of Nagorny Karabakh Armenians as a result of the war unleashed by Azerbaijan in an attempt to stifle the peaceful efforts of the people of Nagorny Karabakh to achieve self-determination. Today, Azerbaijan is trying to sell itself as a victim in the eyes of the international community. But it is a victim of the aggressive policies and actions carried out by its own Government.

The people of Nagorny Karabakh responded to the military onslaught in the same way as any other people would: they defended their lives, their families, their homes and their land. At present, those territories —

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan on a point of order.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): I would like to refer to your earlier statement, Mr. President, that all statements in favour of or objecting to the recommendation of the General Committee should be procedural, not substantive. The representative of Armenia is touching on the substance of the question.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

Mr. Martirosyan (Armenia): Rule 23 of the rules of procedure states that debate on the inclusion of an item on the agenda "shall be limited to three speakers in favour of, and three against, the inclusion". I am speaking against.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): The day before yesterday, the General Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the item —

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Armenia on a point of order.

Mr. Martirosyan (Armenia): I have not yet finished my statement. I ask for permission to complete it.

Those territories currently serve as a buffer zone between Nagorny Karabakh and Armenia, since the conflict has not yet been settled. A 10-year self-maintained ceasefire is holding, without a single peacekeeper on the ground separating the conflicting forces. The ceasefire is holding because of the military balance, an indispensable component of which are territories. There is regular monthly monitoring by the Personal Representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and his team. His reports are presented to the broad OIC membership. No incident or event of an urgent character that would constitute a dangerous development has been observed or reported.

The Nagorny Karabakh peace process has picked up some speed over the past year. The package of issues under consideration covers the status of Nagorny Karabakh, security arrangements, territories, refugees and internally displaced persons, communications and the lifting of the blockade. None of these tough, complex problems can be considered and finally resolved individually — separate from the package. Experience of the peace negotiations within the Minsk Group from 1990 to 1997 explicitly demonstrated that it will be impossible to reach a final agreement on issues of mutual withdrawal from the territories in the absence of a clear understanding on the final status of Nagorny Karabakh.

The current attempts by Azerbaijan amount to the creation of a parallel process, which would be damaging to the prospects for peace and the resolution of the conflict. Armenia is committed to the negotiations within the Minsk Group and stands ready to work constructively with the co-Chairmen towards a comprehensive solution to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. At the same time, I am authorized to state that if Azerbaijan separates individual components from the comprehensive package, it should negotiate those components directly with Nagorny Karabakh. That would be in accordance with various Security Council resolutions that Azerbaijan tends to refer to selectively, without itself complying with the provisions.

I would like to ask all Member States to take action against the request by Azerbaijan for the inclusion of this new agenda item.

Two days ago, while concluding the meeting of the General Committee, you, Sir, announced that the agenda item would be considered under the heading "Maintenance of international peace and security". That is exactly the perspective from which we need to

look at this issue and make our judgement. The argument of urgency was brought up for the inclusion of a new agenda item. Yet there was no factual justification presented. During the past several days we heard the argument that this is a procedural issue. Yet this so-called procedural issue may endanger the peace process, threatening the relative peace and stability in the region, as explicitly acknowledged by several delegations. In the face of this potential danger, I cannot but pose this question to the General Assembly: who is going to bear the responsibility for the possible implications of such so-called procedural issues?

The President (*spoke in French*): I would like to stress that we are not currently debating the substance of any question.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): I would like first of all to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the fact that the statement by the Armenian Ambassador has now clearly demonstrated that there is a major, acute problem between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and it should be treated properly by this House.

Another accusation was made with regard to the countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). I would like to remind our Armenian colleague that the OIC is not a religious, but a political organization, represented and respected across a broad cultural and geographical spectrum.

The day before yesterday, the General Committee decided to recommend, with no objection — I underline the fact that there was no objection — to the General Assembly that the item entitled "The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan" be included in the agenda of this session. That decision by the General Committee reconfirms that Azerbaijan's request is legitimate and fully in line with the Charter, in particular with paragraph 2 of Article 11, in accordance with which the General Assembly may discuss any questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security brought before it by any Member of the United Nations, as well as Article 14, in accordance with which the General Assembly may recommend measures for the adjustment of any situation, regardless of its origin, which it deems likely to impair the general welfare or friendly relations among nations.

The General Assembly is the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations. The very purpose of this house, as designed by its founders, is to serve as a forum for open debate and discussion on any issue. The Charter gives us, like any other Member State, the right to raise questions of vital importance to the security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country. We are ready for open debate and discussion and believe no one has anything to hide. This delegation is certain that each and every member of the United Nations has the right to speak out and to be heard. Otherwise, what is the sense of being a member of the United Nations? We are convinced that the General Assembly, upholding the letter and the spirit of the United Nations Charter, will approve the General Committee's recommendation contained in paragraph four of document A/59/250/Add.3.

Mr. Cengizer (Turkey): When the issue of the inclusion of an additional item on the agenda of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, entitled "The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan", was discussed in the General Committee only two days ago, no member of the Committee, nor any other member who took the floor, objected to the right of a Member State to raise before this Assembly matters relating to the maintenance of peace and security. That was the underlying reasoning of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) from the very start.

The international community is aware that the situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan has not shown any progress for more than 10 years now. We within the OIC, like other interested parties, also support the efforts of the Minsk Group, and especially the Prague Process, aimed at a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

However, unless we achieve due awareness in international public opinion of the frustration felt by those who, on a daily basis, still have to go through the strain caused by that long-standing conflict, we will risk relegating the issue, as well, to the realm of so-called frozen conflicts.

It is time, therefore, that the General Assembly address this issue in earnest in the framework of the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, which emphasize the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. By doing so, we will also remain true to the spirit and letter of the relevant articles of our Charter, which

accords to us certain responsibilities in matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.

We sincerely hope that an honest, open and forthcoming debate of this issue will serve the cause of a just and viable settlement of this conflict, which has beleaguered the region for many years, so that all the peoples of the region can begin to look forward to mutual understanding, cooperation and shared achievements in this new century.

Mr. Khalid (Pakistan): Azerbaijan has requested the inclusion of a new agenda item entitled "The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan", in the agenda of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Pakistan believes that any Member State has the right to request consideration of an issue that it deems important. The Charter specifically provides, under paragraph 2 of Article 11, that the General Assembly, "may discuss any questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security brought before it by any Member of the United Nations". And article 14 provides that the General Assembly may recommend measures for the peaceful adjustment of any situation, regardless of origin, which it deems likely to impair the general welfare or friendly relations among nations. Thus, the General Assembly has the Charter-granted responsibility to consider such issues.

On 27 October, the General Committee decided and recommended that this issue be included in the agenda of the General Assembly's current session. According to our understanding, it is the General Committee's prerogative to decide on the procedure to be followed. While we feel that the procedural issue has already been decided by the General Committee, the General Assembly may also endorse the decision of the General Committee. Pakistan supports the inclusion of this agenda item on the agenda of the fifty-ninth session.

Mr. Hamburger (Netherlands): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

As members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the countries of the European Union support the continuous efforts of the Minsk Group toward a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The recent meetings between the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, which took place regularly in Prague this year, have lead to productive discussions. Those discussions have given a strong impetus to the negotiations. In September in Astana, the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group presented to the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan their assessment of the situation and a road map for the continuation of negotiations. They are now awaiting a reply.

The European Union countries are of the opinion that such a promising process, which is being handled within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, should be allowed to develop without interference. We understand the concerns of the delegation of Azerbaijan, but we believe that this session is neither the time, nor the venue, to pursue this, and that the Azerbaijan initiative may jeopardize the ongoing negotiations.

There was no unanimity in the General Committee on the inclusion of the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh on the agenda, and the European Union would have preferred that the issue had not been voted for recommendation to the General Assembly. However, in light of all those considerations, the European Union will abstain on the vote on this agenda item.

Mr. Duclos (France) (*spoke in French*): Indeed many speakers have referred to the Minsk Group and I think it is quite legitimate and desirable from the point of view of the members of this Assembly that the position of the Chairs of the Minsk Group be stated, and so I am speaking on behalf of them, that is, on behalf of the Russian Federation, the United States and France. However, I have confined my comments to the following procedural points.

First, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is dealing with this question and has been doing so for a long time. It has been doing so in a serious-minded and active manner, particularly within the Minsk Group. I will refer to one example. The Minsk Group recently took the initiative of holding the Prague Process. The Prague Process consists of meetings between the Foreign Ministers of

Azerbaijan and Armenia, which has already lead to productive discussions between the parties.

At the Astana meeting of the Commonwealth of Independent States a month ago, the Minsk Group proposed an assessment of the situation and is awaiting comments from the parties. Today, Azerbaijan has voiced specific concerns regarding the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. We believe that those concerns can be fully addressed within the format and according to the procedures that already exist.

Secondly, the introduction of a new item on the agenda of the General Assembly could have two negative consequences. First, in light of the situation that we have described, it would be harmful to efforts to find a just, lasting settlement to that problem, particularly at this juncture. Secondly, it would make it impossible to obtain consensus and could therefore be counterproductive. We suggest that we avoid creating such a situation.

Thirdly, we have no doubt as to the sincerity of the delegation of Azerbaijan when it states its concerns, but we do not believe that this session of the General Assembly is the right time or the right forum to assume this task.

Fourthly, we urge the parties to consider the possibility of a fact-finding mission of the OSCE as one option for addressing this question.

Finally, again from a procedural perspective, we are not convinced that this question meets the criteria of urgency and importance, as spelled out in Article 15.

The President (*spoke in French*): A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Brunei Darussalam, Comoros, Cuba, Djibouti, Guyana, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Republic of Moldova, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Suriname, Togo, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Yemen

Against:

Armenia, Gambia

Abstaining:

Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Serbia and Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Tonga, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Vanuatu, Venezuela

By 42 votes to 2, with 99 abstentions, the General Assembly decided to include the item on its agenda.

[Subsequently, the delegation of the Gambia informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour; the delegations of Germany and Uruguay informed the Secretariat that they had intended to abstain.]

The President (*spoke in French*): In paragraph 4 (b), the General Committee further recommends that the item be considered directly in plenary.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to consider the item directly in plenary?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform members that the item entitled "The situation in

the occupied territories of Azerbaijan" becomes item 163 on the agenda of the current session.

In paragraph 5 of the same document, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that agenda item 36, "The situation in the Middle East", and agenda item 37, "Question of Palestine", be considered separately.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to consider agenda item 36, "The situation in the Middle East", and agenda item 37, "Question of Palestine", separately?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Israel.

Mr. Cohen (Israel): Allow me to express my disappointment over the decision of the General Committee to recommend that the Assembly split its consideration of agenda item 36, on the situation in the Middle East, and item 37 on the question of Palestine, which had been scheduled, according to a previous decision, to be considered jointly. Progress demands efficiency and this is simply not a decision built on efficiency.

Just a few weeks ago, this Assembly held a joint debate on agenda item 52, "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly", and agenda item 54, "Strengthening of the United Nations system". Those initiatives, as well as others, such as those set out in the Millennium Declaration, call for a more efficient approach to our work whereby redundancies and duplicate processes are eliminated. As the Secretary-General wrote in "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", the General Assembly

> "considers far too many overlapping items, and with a frequency that is often not merited" (*A/57/387, para. 16*).

Great improvements are possible, however, if duplicative items can be combined and closely-related issues clustered into a single discussion, leading to outcomes of greater policy relevance and impact.

In many areas, those goals are being implemented. For example, it was an efficient decision this year to jointly consider agenda item 11, "Report of the Security Council", and agenda item 53, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". It is unfortunate, however, that one of the only subjects that is immune from streamlining, revitalization and reform is the Arab-Israeli conflict. A total of 20 General Assembly meetings were devoted to Israel at the fifty-eighth session. By way of contrast, none was devoted to world hunger and only two were devoted to HIV/AIDS. That does not do the credibility and reputation of the United Nations any good, nor does it help the General Assembly to play a constructive role in world affairs, including in the Middle East.

As we have amply demonstrated over the years, we are quite willing to debate the issues presented by our region's difficult situation. At least by streamlining the debate, however, we could have addressed the issues in a more determined, more serious and more effective manner. It is for that reason that we believe the decision of the General Committee is imprudent and contrary to the goals of revitalization and reform that should guide the work of this body in all its aspects. Rather than break the consensus, however, we merely dissociate ourselves from this decision.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of the fourth report of the General Committee.

Agenda item 15 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs:

(b) Election of eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council

The President (*spoke in French*): As members will recall, when the 45th plenary meeting was adjourned yesterday, there still remained two seats to be filled: one from among the Eastern European States and one from among the Latin American and Caribbean States.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall proceed now to the third round of balloting, by secret ballot, for the two remaining seats.

The third round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Eastern European States that were not elected in the previous ballot, namely Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and to the two States from among the Latin American and Caribbean States that were not elected in the previous ballot, namely Costa Rica and Venezuela.

That is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "C" and "D" will now be distributed.

May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the names of the States for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "C" for the Eastern European States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Albania or the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or if they contain the names of more than one State. Ballot papers marked "D" for the Latin American and Caribbean States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Costa Rica or Venezuela or if they contain the names of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Ioannou (Cyprus), Mr. Seyoum (Eritrea), Mr. Mallia (Malta), Mr. Micanek (Czech Republic), Ms. Fricot (Saint Lucia) and Mr. Realini (Monaco) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 11.15 a.m. and resumed at 11.55 a.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): The result of the voting is as follows:

Group C — Eastern European States

Number of ballot papers:	172
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	172
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	171
Required two-thirds majority:	114
Number of votes obtained:	
Albania	118
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	53

Group D — Latin American and Caribbean States

Number of valid ballots:	172
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	171
Required two-thirds majority:	114
Number of votes obtained:	
Costa Rica	112
Venezuela	59

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, Albania was elected a member of the Economic and Social Council for a three-year term beginning 1 January 2005.

The President (*spoke in French*): There still remains one seat to be filled from among the Latin American and Caribbean States.

We shall therefore proceed to a third restricted ballot. This fourth round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Latin American and Caribbean States that were not elected but that obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot, namely Costa Rica and Venezuela. That is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "D" will now be distributed.

May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers the name of the State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "D" for the Latin American and Caribbean States will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Costa Rica or Venezuela or if they contain the names of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Ioannou (Cyprus), Mr. Seyoum (Eritrea), Mr. Mallia (Malta), Mr. Micanek (Czech Republic), Ms. Fricot (Saint Lucia) and Mr. Realini (Monaco) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 12.10 p.m. and resumed at 12.30 p.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): The result of the voting is as follows:

Group D — Latin American and Caribbean States	
Number of ballot papers:	173
Number of invalid ballots:	1
Number of valid ballots:	172
Abstentions:	2
Number of members voting:	170
Required two-thirds majority:	114
Number of votes obtained:	
Costa Rica	130
Venezuela	40

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, Costa Rica was elected a member of the Economic and Social Council for a three-year term beginning 1 January 2005.

The President (*spoke in French*): The following 18 States have thus been elected members of the Economic and Social Council for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2005: Albania, Australia, Brazil, Chad, China, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Guinea, Iceland, India, Lithuania, Mexico, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Thailand and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I congratulate those States which have been elected members of the Economic and Social Council, and I thank the tellers for their assistance in this election.

This concludes our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 15.

Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to remind members that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 17 September 2004, the General Assembly decided that, during the final two weeks of Ramadan, from Monday, 1 November 2004, to Thursday, 11 November 2004, the hours of plenary meetings and of meetings of the Main Committees would be from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and from 2.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. at the latest.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.